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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Return of population and refugees displaced since 1967

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of paragraph 5 of its resolution 47/69 G of 14 December 1992, entitled "Return of population and refugees displaced since 1967", the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
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> "...
>
> "1. Reaffirms the inalienable right of all displaced inhabitants to return to their homes or former places of residence in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and declares once more that any attempt to restrict, or to attach conditions to, the free exercise of the right to return by any displaced person is inconsistent with that inalienable right and is inadmissible;
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> "2. Considers any and all agreements embodying any restriction on, or condition for, the return of the displaced inhabitants as null and void;
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> "3. Strongly deplores the continued refusal of the Israeli authorities to take steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants;
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> "4. Calls once more upon Israel:
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> "(a) To take immediate steps for the return of all displaced inhabitants;
>
> "(b) To desist from all measures that obstruct the return of the displaced inhabitants, including measures affecting the physical and demographic structure of the occupied territories;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to report to the General Assembly, before the opening of its forty-eighth session, on the compliance of Israel with paragraph 4 above."

2. On 18 February 1993, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in which he drew attention to his reporting responsibility under the General Assembly resolution and requested the Permanent Representative to inform him of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged to take in implementation of the relevant provisions of the Assembly resolution.

3. In a note verbale dated 15 June 1993, the Permanent Representative of Israel replied as follows:

"Israel's position on this resolution has been detailed fully in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years. The report of the Secretary-General (A/47/491) contained the latest of these replies.

"The Government of Israel has continued to make every effort possible to review individual cases of resettlement based upon the merits of each case. As a result, the number of persons that have returned to the administered territories is 94,439. This figure does not include those who returned to Judea and Samaria in 1968 or to the Gaza District in 1967-1968, for which figures are unavailable. However, it is well known that a large number of people returned to the areas during that period."

4. In connection with paragraph 4 (a) of General Assembly resolution 47/69 G, the Secretary-General has obtained from the Commissioner-General of UNRWA the information available to him on the return of refugees registered with the Agency. As indicated in previous reports on the subject, the Agency is not involved in any arrangements for the return of refugees nor is it involved in any arrangements for the return of displaced persons who are not registered as refugees. Its information is based on requests by returning registered refugees for transfer of their entitlements for services to the areas to which they have returned and subsequent correction of records. The Agency would not necessarily be aware of the return of any registered refugees who did not request the provision of services. So far as is known to the Agency, between 1 July 1992 and 30 June 1993, 275 refugees registered with UNRWA returned to the West Bank and 65 to the Gaza Strip. It should be noted that some of these may not themselves have been displaced in 1967, but may be members of the family of a displaced registered refugee whom they accompanied on his return or joined thereafter. Thus, taking into account the estimate given in paragraph 4 of last year's report (A/47/491), the number of displaced registered refugees who are known by the Agency to have returned to the occupied territories since June 1967 is about 12,740. The Agency is unable to estimate the total number of displaced inhabitants who have returned. It keeps records only of registered refugees and, as pointed out above, even those records, particularly with respect to location of registered refugees, may be incomplete.